



## **Standards of Ethical Conduct Old Plank Christian Academy**

### **CODE OF ETHICS AND PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR EDUCATORS**

Old Plank Christian Academy values the worth and dignity of every person, the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, acquisition of knowledge, and the nurture of democratic citizenship. Essential to the achievement of these standards are the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal opportunity for all. Further, we recognize that each believer is enabled to hear the Holy Spirit and to respond to the Word of God and the Spirit; that each student has a purpose for which they were born and needs specific training to achieve and fulfill this purpose.

Our primary concern is the student, and the development of his/her potential under the guidance of God's will and in partnership with parents. Communication and relationships with parents are the cornerstone of our educational process. Employees will pursue professional growth and will strive to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity. Employees will endeavor to maintain the respect and confidence of their colleagues, students, parents, and other members of the community. Every educator at Old Plank Christian Academy will strive to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct.

#### **I. Concern for the student requires that the instructional personnel at Old Plank Christian Academy:**

- A. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning and/or to the student's spiritual, mental, and/or physical health and/or safety.
- B. Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.
- C. Shall not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view but bring the spiritual maturity of Godly leadership into the classroom and create an environment where the Word of God is heard and obeyed.
- D. Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program.
- E. Shall not intentionally expose a student or parent to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
- F. Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights.
- G. Shall not discriminate against or harass any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, handicapping condition, or social and family background.

H. Shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.

I. Shall not exploit a relationship with a student or parent for personal gain or advantage.

J. Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes, is required for the safety and well-being of a student/family, or is required by law.

**II. Concern for the public requires that the individual employee/educator:**

A. Shall take reasonable precautions to distinguish between personal views and those of Old Plank Christian Academy when conversing publicly.

B. Shall not intentionally distort or misrepresent facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression.

C. Shall use utmost discretion when representing Old Plank Christian Academy on social media, blogs, websites, in printed material, or other forms of public media.

D. Shall not use institutional privileges for personal gain or advantage.

E. Shall not accept any gratuity, gift, or favor that could influence professional judgment.

F. Shall not offer any gratuity, gift, or favor to obtain special privileges.

**III. Obligation to the education profession requires that the individual employee/educator:**

A. Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings.

B. Shall not on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, or social and family background deny to a colleague professional benefit or advantages or participation in any professional organization.

C. Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.

D. Shall not engage in harassment or discriminatory conduct which unreasonably interferes with an individual's performance of professional or work responsibilities or with the orderly process of education or which creates a hostile, intimidating, abusive, offensive, or oppressive environment; and further, shall make reasonable effort to assure that everyone is protected from such harassment or discrimination.

E. Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague.

F. Shall not use coercive means or promise special treatment to influence professional judgment of colleagues.

G. Shall not misrepresent one's own professional qualifications.

H. Shall not submit fraudulent information in any document concerning professional activities.

I. Shall not make any fraudulent statement or fail to disclose a material fact in one's own or another's application for a professional possession.

J. Shall not withhold information regarding a position from an applicant or misrepresent an assignment or conditions of employment.

K. Shall not assist entry into or continuance in the education profession of any person known to be unqualified in accordance with the Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida, applicable Florida Statutes and or the Florida State Board of Education rules in being hired or in continuing to be a teacher or school administrator.

L. Shall remain physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually pure with the highest regard for the will of God as it pertains to every aspect of their lives.

#### **IV. Requirements/guidelines for reporting misconduct, abuse, or neglect by educators/employees**

A. Shall self-report within forty-eight hours to appropriate authorities any arrests/charges involving the abuse of a child or the sale and/or possession of a controlled substance. Such notice shall not be considered an admission of guilt, nor shall such notice be admissible for any purpose in any proceeding, civil or criminal, administrative or judicial, investigatory, or adjudicatory. In addition, shall self-report any conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, commitment to a pretrial diversion program, or entering of a plea of guilty or *Nolo Contendere* for any criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation within forty-eight hours after the final judgment.

B. Shall report any misconduct by school personnel to the school administration (904-783-4888 opt.2).

Reporting Misconduct by Instructional Personnel and Administrators: All employees and administrators have an obligation to report misconduct by instructional personnel and school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student.

C. Liability Protections:

*Any person, official, or institution participating in good faith in any act authorized or required by law or reporting in good faith any instance of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect to the department or any law enforcement agency, shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability which might otherwise result by reason of such action. (F.S. 39.203)*

*An employer who discloses information about a former or current employee to a prospective employer of the former or current employee upon request of the prospective employer or of the former or current employee is immune from civil liability for such disclosure or its consequences unless it is shown by clear and convincing evidence that the information disclosed by the former or current employer was knowingly false or violated any civil right of the former or current employee protected under F.S. Chapter 760. (F.S. 768.095)*

D. Penalties for failing to report child abuse or misconduct which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student may include a verbal reprimand, a written reprimand to be included in the employee's file, suspension from employment with or without pay for a period of time to be determined by the administration, or termination of employment.

E. Reporting Misconduct by Instructional Personnel and Administrators All employees and administrators have an obligation to report misconduct by instructional personnel and school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student.

Examples of misconduct include obscene language, drug and alcohol use, disparaging comments, prejudice or bigotry, sexual innuendo, cheating or testing violations, physical aggression, and accepting or offering favors. Reports of misconduct by employees should be made to Gary Griffis (904) 783-4888 opt. 2. Reports of misconduct committed by administrators should be made to Gary Griffis (904) 783-4888/opt. 2. Legally sufficient allegations of misconduct by Florida certified educators will be reported to the Office of Professional Practices Services. Policies and procedures for reporting misconduct by instructional personnel or school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student are posted on (1) Interior wall at entrance of

buildings A, B, C, Gym, and (2) on our Web site at <http://www.oldplankca.com/ethics-training-and-reporting>

F. Reporting Child Abuse, Abandonment or Neglect: All employees and agents have an affirmative duty to report all actual or suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect. Call 1-800-96-ABUSE or report online at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>.

G. Signs of Physical Abuse: The child may have unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, or other injuries; broken bones; or burns. A child experiencing physical abuse may seem withdrawn or depressed, seem afraid to go home or may run away, shy away from physical contact, be aggressive, or wear inappropriate clothing to hide injuries.

H. Signs of Sexual Abuse: The child may have torn, stained or bloody underwear, trouble walking or sitting, pain or itching in genital area, or a sexually transmitted disease. A child experiencing sexual abuse may have unusual knowledge of sex or act seductively, fear a particular person, seem withdrawn or depressed, gain or lose weight suddenly, shy away from physical contact, or run away from home.

I. Signs of Neglect: The child may have unattended medical needs, little or no supervision at home, poor hygiene, or appear underweight. A child experiencing neglect may be frequently tired or hungry, steal food, or appear overly needy for adult attention.

J. Patterns of Abuse: Serious abuse usually involves a combination of factors. While a single sign may not be significant, a pattern of physical or behavioral signs is a serious indicator and should be reported.

#### **V. Policy training and review:**

A. These policies shall be reviewed annually during pre-planning as part of the regular policy training.

B. Training Requirement: All instructional personnel and administrators are required as a condition of employment to complete training on these standards of ethical conduct.